

**EMERGENCY OUTREACH BUREAU MENTAL EVALUATION TEAMS
RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE
By Paul Sacco, LCSW, MH Clinical Program Head**



The Los Angeles County Mental Evaluation Team (LACMET) Coalition won the Peace Officers Association of Los Angeles County (POALAC) award for Excellence in Community Policing at the annual Centurion Awards for Excellence and Installation Banquet on Thursday, March 19, 2015.

The event was held at the University of Southern California (USC) Town and Gown on the USC campus and was hosted by Assistant Chief of Police Michael Moore. Josh Rubenstein and Sandra Mitchell of CBS2 and KCAL9 news presented the awards. Multiple police agency chiefs were present, including the new sheriff, Jim McDonald of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

Miriam Brown, LACDMH Law Enforcement Team District Chief and Juan Aguirre, Law Enforcement Team MH Clinical Supervisor were also in attendance.

The LACMET Coalition won the Centurion Award for Excellence in Community Policing. The LACMET Coalition is made up of peace officers and LACDMH mental health clinicians from Pasadena, Alhambra, Burbank, Long Beach and the Sheriff's Department. The police departments of Gardena, Glendale and Santa Monica, as well as the California Highway Patrol, were also recognized for their participation in the Coalition that addresses issues involved with providing compassionate services to the homeless and mentally ill in Los Angeles County.



As the various team members approached the stage to receive their awards, Josh Rubenstein made it a point to say LACMET was “what it’s all about”, regarding the creation of collaborative partnerships to address the needs of the homeless and mentally ill in our communities.

In September 2013, Pasadena Police Department Officer Domino Scott-Jackson and LACDMH Clinician Guillermo Vasquez of the Pasadena Homeless Outreach and Psychological Evaluation (HOPE) Team came to the realization that many clients were receiving duplicate services in other jurisdictions that impacted the continuum of care as well as placed a strain on city resources. Additionally, various community agencies were unable to follow the progress of clients referred for assistance, resulting in inadequate care.

Recognizing an opportunity to address these issues, Scott-Jackson and Vasquez decided to collaborate with neighboring police and community agencies and, through their efforts, the LACMET Coalition was formed. Now, nearly 16 months later, multiple police agencies actively participate in the monthly meetings, exchange information regarding the care of the homeless and mentally ill, and educate themselves regarding appropriate care, treatment and available treatment and case management resources.

The LACMET Coalition also brings in guest speakers and clients with lived-experience to lecture and provide information regarding the legal, emotional and psychosocial aspects of mental illness. As a result, members of LACMET now provide a more cooperative, compassionate and educated approach to assisting clients and families in need.



The members of the LACMET Coalition include: Guillermo Vasquez, MHCRN, Officer Domino Scott-Jackson, Jimmy Recio, MHCRN, and Officer Elgin Lee of the Pasadena HOPE Team; Dr. Jennifer Hunt and Officer Kristiana Sanchez of the Burbank MHETeam; Marisa Soria, LCSW, and Officer Ruben Soriano of Alhambra MET; Juan Aguirre, MH Clinical Supervisor; Anika Simpson, MHCRN, Anthony Oliver LPT III, Officer Dirk Blansfield, Officer Luis Alva, Officer Frank Marin and Officer Allen Megarit of the Sheriff's CRU; Frank Mullnix, Senior MHCRN, and Officer Andre Booker, Emily Brennan, LCSW, and Officer Ricardo Ramirez of Long Beach MET.

Congratulations on your well-deserved efforts, and thank you for all for promoting the need for compassion and interagency cooperation when assisting the homeless and mentally ill in our communities.